

Maybe It's Okay to Wait for School

Written by Krista Eger.

Not a lot of people know this, but we put our kids in public school for the first time this year. I haven't been very open about it because it's not what we originally wanted and the circumstances that drove us to this decision were very difficult. One of my personality traits is that I always feel like I need to explain myself (even though logically I know I don't have to) and I know if I was open about it, I would compulsively want to explain why to everyone and the thought of that exhausts me. But the first term ended this week and I attended my first parent teacher conference and am feeling more confident that this was the right decision for our family at this point in our life.

I've been thinking a lot lately about how grateful I am that we didn't put Nate in school any earlier than we did (he's in 3rd grade). He has been diagnosed with ADHD and also mildly spectrum, but has grown out of a lot of his more difficult and frustrating behaviors. He is the reason I was so motivated to learn about peaceful parenting and find alternatives to the traditional discipline styles our culture thinks are best. He never responded to things the way I expected him to and I had to find something different that would work. I could go on for twenty paragraphs about how much I feel like applying Parent Effectiveness Training principles has paid off with him especially (I struggle more with my daughter because she doesn't think as black and white as Nate), but I'd be going off topic.

I work at a pediatric clinic and have read countless charts of kids who have been diagnosed with ADHD. Kids younger than Nate that act EXACTLY like he used to. They're put on all sorts of stimulants and struggle significantly with behavior at school (and at home). Nate went to preschool and his teacher used to complain to me all the time that he was different and there was something wrong with him (which is why I took him to a children's behavioral clinic where he was diagnosed with ADHD in the first place). Yet there I sat with his teacher at parent teacher conference in awe as she told me she had no concerns about his behavior.

I don't necessarily think that every kid with ADHD wouldn't have issues if they were enrolled in school at an older age. Actually the two most common things kids with ADHD have are lack of good sleep habits, and broken families or traumatic childhoods. But I think there definitely is something to say about how the school environment doesn't fit these kids' brain types and waiting until they're older could make a huge difference. But I'm not here to pass judgments because I don't know everyone's story and family situation. I am just grateful that things are working out for him and that he loves school so much!

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